

Division of Labor, Evolution, Tom Woods



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found here. FTC-only RSS feed available here.

With today's column, I am still four columns behind on the year. I am always unprepared for the long days of Summer, when I often work outside with my beautiful bride. We are often slaloming our zero turn mowers over the hayfields until the sun is just an orange glow in the west, sometimes up until 10pm. Then we usually eat together. I am no longer doing adjunct teaching in Lexington, also a Summer happening. But the hiatus may be permanent this time, as our new governor has put the community college system on short rations. When I have more or less regular duties, I can carve out time to sit to write for EVC.

No excuses, though, I'm mostly saying that I will make every effort to catch up, now that I have analyzed the problem. It is my objective to author 26 columns a year.

I will begin my comeback with a rambling re-enactment of a conversation recently engaged in on Facebook. Then more rambling, as I consider some of the implications of evolution. And speaking of evolution, we have a highly evolved, modern Socrates amongst us — Tom Woods is his name and knowledge is his game. Be sure to check Topic #3 below.

Division of Labor

A picture of a bustling pre-1913 Washington, DC, looking along Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol, shows a prosperous and vital cityscape. Overburned on the scene are the words, "Did you know? ... Prior to 1913 Americans kept 100% of their paycheck." This picture is courtesy of TheFreeThoughtProject.com. It also has a sub-caption, "There were still roads, schools, colleges, fire departments." I shared this meme on Facebook, initiating this fascinating discussion:

NG: Growing your own food also back then. Something I'm still doing.

VV: My grandparents lived in that time. On one side, they lived in Boston — the 2nd largest US city then. They lived by division of labor. On the other side, my ancestors lived in Liberty KY — a town of 1,000 then. They lived by division of labor. Something I'm trying to do still.

NG: Given modern technology, its a great era to do both, grow great quality food at home, and do division of labor. But I worry that some anarchists see homegrown as some kind of a threat to division of labor. I am into division of labor. But I also love the high quality of my own home produced food, and all the wonderful exercise, the beauty of greenery, the joy for my family picking fresh food, the joy of nature on my own property. It's incomparable and cannot be bought. I have no quarrel with folks who get their food in the market, I get some of mine there too. ☐

NG: I don't use public parks. I prefer paradise on my property in all cases.

VV: Public parks may be the sole contribution of the British Empire to civilization, the sole expression of their gardener soul, usually overridden by their imperialistic zeal. That being said, we have lived in our own private paradise for a dozen years, now.

VV: The government also thrives through division of labor, yours and mine. As their slice of the pie grows, so does parasitism grow in advance of it. The parasites are not just thieves and slackers, but bankers, war profiteers, and drug dealers.

NG: Technology is going to squelch that slowly causing the state to wither, by way of home and self-education and unschooling on the net, useful news sources and social media, and also non-state market online options. IMHO ☐

VV: I share your hope, Girl. If we wait by the river long enough, the

bodies of our enemies will float by. (from Sun Tzu)

NG: <3 Their statist thoughts will be the embodiment of their carcasses.

VV: Yes, Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson. Statism thrives on short term ideas, and avoidance of the longer term.

NG: Why do some anarchists seem to be threatened by people who grow some of their own food? I don't get it.

VV: I haven't a clue, unless they miscalculate that you should be tilting at windmills rather than tending a garden. The voluntarist focuses on what she or he can do, not on what others should do. Division of labor makes for more choice. Both sets of grands tended gardens. If it were not for that, who knows when I may have tasted asparagus or green beans. But it was also because of division of labor that I had catfish and Ernie Kovacs and violin music and lobster and unhomogenized milk.

NG: Division of labor is crucial, but not at the expense of my private property rights. Private property rights trump all, otherwise you're just a communist.

VV: Division of labor, in my understanding, is the antithesis of communism, or any form of collectivism. True division of labor never happens without voluntary exchange, never can occur without property.

Note — I am listening to Human Action, so maybe I'm vulnerable to being pedantic. Sorry. Mises and Rothbard drained every accidental tendency toward collectivism from me so thoroughly that I tend to forget the ambiguity of language and that there are many sides to a story.

NG: To me, you can't even have division of labor that isn't some kind of or degree of slavery, if you don't have private property rights first and always foremost.

VV: If you have voluntary division of labor, you must have, not only property rights but, property, in yourself, in the product of your labor, in the time and space you occupy, in your life and your voluntary associations. Otherwise you have nothing to exchange.

NG: I'd rather nothing to exchange, if we don't start with private property right. Work up to division of labor, which with complete private property rights, actually would be voluntary then.

VV: But if there is no voluntary will to exchange, property is a doorstep. By natural law, we have both property (our own person, space, time, and labor) and the will to divide, multiply, and exchange property. This is at the beginning of each life. Only wrongful others can steal or seize control against your will.

I have some further observations on the above, about the dao of the division of labor to include gardening, about the dao of Hazlitt's Lesson with respect to the division of labor and the floaters who were enemies, about public parks, firefighters, libraries, societies.

The dao of the division of labor to include gardening — We are born through division of labor. Contributions of labor are required of two separate and distinct biological entities, if not more, such as doctors, ambulance drivers, nurses, domestic partners. If we do not pass through some version of this biological gate, the question of property is moot. There is no attempt to guess when life starts. Life starts, period. Plants grow, dividing their biological labors with those of their environment, including gardeners who share in that environment.

The dao of Hazlitt's Lesson with respect to the division of labor and the floaters who were enemies — Both Henry Hazlitt, who wrote that the one lesson of economics is that we must wait to see how all events affect all affected parties both in the short and the long run, and Sun Tzu saw the virtue of patience. Divide your labor of waiting across the time that you have to spend. "Be not the first by whom the new are tried, nor yet the last to lay the old aside," wrote Alexander Pope. A clear understanding of the fullness of time is essential. You own your time too, so spend it wisely.

Public parks, firefighters, libraries, societies — These are things that always start with voluntarism. Johnny-come-lately statists are usurpers who steal the the thing made by self-organizing phenomena, to try to squeeze some personal power from its expropriation/exploitation. Include roads, freedom, garden spots, and love with these as well.

Evolution

Beats there a heart so hopeless as to never have wished that its species would not evolve to a higher plane, preferably before its time is done. I have heard many friends express a sentiment somewhat alike to this — surely, mankind is put here, with its reason, thought, symbolism. and communication, to achieve something greater.

In a very broad sense this is true. The evolution of things natural seems to have a general direction, rising forward. Of course that could be an illusion from a short sample. Or it could be confirmation bias.

But hold on. Evolution must work for accrual, and it must work for cooperation. This is a mechanical tautology. As evolution works for a single thing, each single change will generate randomly. That change will then enter a network where the change will either cooperate with the network or it will not. This is genetic change, happening without any connection to the future. Other genetic change will be nipped in the bud so quickly that its absence will be seen as a change, and we often refer to this as memetic change, because it looks as though factors of the environment brought about the change. A third way is true memetic change, where something within the learning process causes a biological change. So, when I say that evolution works for accrual, there is something in the change that is found positive by the species. When I say that evolution works for cooperation, there is something within the change that helps the species to survive conflict with external forces. Both accrual and cooperation are found among genetic, false memetic, and true memetic change.

In the millions of changes which occur in most moments, there is hardly any opportunity for rational input, so I'm saying that evolution will not make species which can stand on the shoulders of giants, except by random happenstance.

The Tom Woods Show

A good while back, I shared what I thought were some excellent libertarian and voluntarist podcasts. This time I will go further, writing about how The Tom Woods Show, and its web pages are a resource, of resources, for the ages.

Let's take a web tour —

Go to TomWoods.com — There you will find the motto, “YOUR DAILY SERVING OF LIBERTY EDUCATION” and that is the very least you will get!

Click on the phrase “CLICK HERE FOR THE LATEST EPISODES!”

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Click on an episode. I’m clicking on “Ep. 694 After Brexit, American Secession?” Directly on the caption.

On this page you see important information about the guest and the episode and links related to Tom’s enterprises, and most critically, links to Internet information that are relevant to the content of the show.

“The Case for American Secession,” by Michael Malice

Guest’s Book, Dear Reader: The Unauthorized Autobiography of Kim Jong Il

Guest’s Website, MichaelMalice.com

Guest’s Twitter, @MichaelMalice

Related Episodes

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Listener Website Mentioned

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- 4) \$160 in Free Bonuses. Free signed copy of my New York Times bestseller *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*, plus a free 10-lesson bonus course on the foundations of liberty, plus a free year's subscription to LibertyClassroom.com, when you subscribe to the Ron Paul Curriculum site through RonPaulHomeschool.com.

Wow! Just wow! Not only is Tom Woods a prolific writer, a gifted teacher, and a prodigious podcaster, he is a treasure trove of connected resources for the new (and veteran) seeker of information about Libertarianism (big L), libertarianism (small l), voluntaryism, free market capitalism, and classical liberalism. Enjoy. There will soon be more than 700 episodes (we are at #694 as of yesterday) with similar breadth and depth for the lifelong learner.

NOTE: Your mileage may vary because of your device of choice. Please look for the target, if you don't see the launch sign. You might end up in the wrong public restroom, otherwise.

Well, one reason it took so long to roll out this edition of FTC is because of the ambition of the segments. I hope you will receive them in the spirit that they are offered — let me know! You have seen that the pace of change has taken on incredible speed and acceleration. We have Hillary and Donald and Gary (given names that seem rather odd for the Oval Office — but we have had a Millard and an Ulysses). We have had Orlando and Philando, mixed too closely with Baton Rouge and Dallas, Don't forget BREXIT and Juno.

I will begin working on the next edition immediately, so I can do one column weekly, from time to time to get up to speed. Stay tuned.

Read more from “Finding the Challenges”:

Photo by Gage Skidmore 